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Ballotpedia's Hall Pass

Keeping you up to date on school board politics and education policy

Welcome to Hall Pass

October 11, 2023

Welcome to Hall Pass, a newsletter written to keep you plugged into the conversations driving school board politics and governance.

In today's edition, you'll find:

- Deep Dive Part 2: The science of reading debate 
- Share candidate endorsements with us!
- School board filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications
- Virginia school board election preview—Prince William County Public Schools
- Extracurricular: education news from around the web
- Candidate Connection survey

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Deep Dive: The science of reading debate

Part two of our deep dive into the debate over the science of reading

Click [here](#) for part one of this series.

Is the science of reading settled science?

This week, we examine the following views on the science behind the science of reading:

- The studies phonics advocates cite to support an evidence-based approach to reading instruction, emphasizing decoding and sounding out words.
- Arguments about whether studies point to the effectiveness of one type of reading instruction over another. Has the debate been settled?

What is the science behind the science of reading?

Scientists focused on literacy research have conducted thousands of studies seeking to understand the science of reading. The selected studies below are frequently cited by phonics proponents to support their approach to reading instruction:

- **Project Follow Through (PFT)** was a government-funded study of about 700,000 students from 1968 to 1977 on the effectiveness of reading instruction programs. A [2018 meta-analysis](#) of PFT and more than 300 other studies found the direct instruction approach to teaching reading (which focuses on phonics instruction) “was the only intervention that had significantly positive impacts on all of the outcome measures.”
- **The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development’s National Reading Panel** [published a meta-analysis](#) in 2000 assessing the results of 38 studies conducted between the 1970s and 2000. The studies indicated that a strong awareness in early grades of how words are made up of smaller sounds (a skill known as phonemic awareness) predicted greater reading success in higher grade levels.
- **The National Early Literacy Panel** [government meta-analysis](#) [published in 2008](#) found children who received instruction on how to sound out or decode words scored better (equal to a 50th percentile to 79th percentile improvement) on phonemic awareness assessments.

The debate: Is the science of reading settled?

The arguments below demonstrate differing views on whether research points to the effectiveness of any specific type of reading instruction:

Decoding “The Simple View of Reading” | Mark Seidenberg, *Reading Matters*

Seidenberg writes that although scientific studies offer insights into how children learn to read, claims that “we know how to teach kids to read” are inaccurate. He argues the simple view of reading (SVR)—a term he uses to describe the belief that children “learn to read by learning how the written code represents spoken language they already know”—is accurate, but doesn’t necessarily support a particular instruction program or amount of phonics instruction. **Seidenberg says, scientific studies “have magnified the expectation that the SVR should also have further implications for instruction. It doesn’t.”**

We Know How to Teach Kids to Read | John McWhorter, *The New York Times*

McWhorter writes that scientific data proves reading instruction focused on phonics is the most effective for teaching young students to read. He specifically argues that the phonics-focused direct instruction model is an evidence-based program with scientifically proven results. The direct instruction model focuses on teaching children to sound out or decode words so they can connect them to words they already know from spoken language. **McWhorter says, “Scientific investigators of how children learn to read have proved repeatedly that phonics works better for more children.”**

Next week, we’ll look at the debate over whether the science of reading should influence policymakers.

Share candidate endorsements with us!

As part of our goal to solve the ballot information problem, Ballotpedia is gathering information about school board candidate endorsements. The ballot information gap widens the further down the ballot you go, and is worst for the more than 500,000 local offices nationwide, such as school boards or special districts. Endorsements can help voters know more about their

candidates and what they stand for.

Do you know of an individual or group that has endorsed a candidate in your district?

Click [here](#) to respond!

School board update: filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications

Ballotpedia has historically covered school board elections in about 500 of the country's largest districts. We're gradually expanding the number we cover with our eye on the more than 13,000 districts with elected school boards.

November elections

Nov. 7 is the biggest election date of the year, and voters across the country will decide state and local races—including for school boards (subscribe to our [Daily Brew](#) newsletter for Ballotpedia's coverage and analysis of elections up and down the ballot).

Over the next month, we'll bring you in-depth coverage of school board *battleground* elections—those we expect to have a meaningful effect on the balance of power on each board or to be particularly competitive or compelling.

Click below to learn more about elections in the following districts:

- [Douglas County School District, Colorado](#) (read our *Hall Pass* coverage of this election [here](#))
- [Richland School District, Washington](#)
- [Prince William County Public Schools, Virginia](#)

We're covering school board elections in the following **16** states on Nov. 7:

School board elections on Nov. 7, 2023

This table shows the 16 states where Ballotpedia is covering school board elections on Nov. 7, 2023, and associated filing deadlines.

State	Filing deadline
Colorado	September 1
Idaho	September 8
Iowa	September 21
Kansas	June 1
Kentucky	June 6
Minnesota	August 15
Mississippi	September 6
New Hampshire	July 21
New Jersey	July 31
New Mexico	August 29
North Carolina	July 21
Ohio	August 9
Pennsylvania	August 1
Texas	August 21
Virginia	June 13
Washington	May 19

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In seven of those states—Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington—we are covering *all* school board elections on Nov. 7.

Virginia school board election preview—Prince William County Public Schools

In last week's edition, we previewed elections in the Douglas County School District, just south of Denver, Colorado. Let's continue our preview of school board battleground elections with a look at the races for Prince William County school board in Virginia on Nov. 7. Virginia is one of 10 states in which

we are covering all school board elections on that day.

First, some brief background on this district:

- **Nineteen candidates are running for seven districts and the chairman's seat.**
- The Prince William County Public Schools board consists of eight members elected to four-year terms.
- The board's chairman is elected at-large, while the rest are elected by district.
- The board's chairman and incumbents in five of the seven districts are running for re-election.
- Jennifer Wall, the incumbent in the Gainesville district, is the only unopposed candidate.
- The district, located west of Alexandria, had approximately 90,070 students as of the 2020-21 school year—making it the second largest district by enrollment in Virginia. Eight House of Delegates districts overlap the Prince William County Public Schools' boundaries.

Democrats currently represent all eight of those districts. In the 2021 gubernatorial election, Terry McAuliffe (D) won Prince William County, defeating Glenn Youngkin (R) 57% to 42%. In the 2020 presidential election, Joe Biden (D) defeated Donald Trump 62.64% to 35.61%.

School board races in Virginia are non-partisan, but the local political parties typically issue endorsements. The Prince William County Democratic Party has endorsed a candidate in all seven contested elections—including all five incumbents running in those races. The Prince William County Republican Party has endorsed a candidate in six of the seven contested elections. The current board has a 7-1 Democratic-endorsed majority.

Local party endorsements in Prince William County Public Schools elections, 2023

District	Candidates	Prince William County, Va., Republican Party	Prince William County, Va., Democratic Party
Chairman	Babur Lateef (incumbent)		✓
	Carrie Rist	✓	
Brentsville	Adele Jackson (incumbent)		✓
	Christopher Lee Funderburg	✓	

	Erica Tredinnick	✓	
Coles	Lisa Zargarpur (incumbent)		✓
	Stephen Spiker	✓	
Gainesville	Jennifer Wall (incumbent)	✓	
Neabsco district	Tracy LaMar Blake		✓
	Padreus Pratter		
Occoquan	Richard Jessie, Jr		✓
	Ryan Wilson Kirkpatrick	✓	
Potomac	Justin Wilk (incumbent)		✓
	Mario Beckles	✓	
Woodbridge	Loree Williams (incumbent)		✓
	Jaylen Custis	✓	
	Shantell Eyvette Rock		

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The election for the at-large chairman seat has had some of the most noteworthy endorsements, including from incumbent members of Congress. High-profile endorsements from state and federal officials have become more common as school board elections have increasingly reflected national political debates.

Incumbent Chairman Babur Lateef, first elected in a 2018 special election, Kimberly Mehlman-Orozco, and Carrie Rist are running. The Prince William County Democratic Party endorsed Lateef, while the Prince William County Republican Party endorsed Rist. U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D), the 2016 Democratic vice presidential nominee, endorsed Lateef. Kaine is the only incumbent U.S. Senator to have endorsed a candidate in the Prince William County Public Schools elections. State Rep. Nick Freitas (R) endorsed Rist. Here are some of the issues candidates are discussing in this race.

Lateef [said](#), “If you were to listen to these folks tonight, you’ll hear folks who are talking about that the sky is falling. And I’ll tell you that the sky is not falling. I believe we are one of the best school divisions in the country and certainly one of the best in the Commonwealth.” Mehlman-Orozco [said](#), “The Virginia Department of Education found that Prince William County Schools were out of compliance, found that these schools had discriminated against kids and had denied them a free and appropriate education.” Rist [said](#), “Every single teacher that I talk to in door-knocking or in the community has said that they’re concerned about lack of discipline and lack of support. We have to fix the school safety crisis.”

Click [here](#) to learn more about the candidates in this race, including their statements and the individuals and organizations who’ve endorsed them. If you know of an interesting school board election we should cover in your community, just reply to this email!

Extracurricular: education news from around the web

This section contains links to recent education-related articles from around the internet. If you know of a story we should be reading, reply to this email to share it with us!

- [Former Loudoun schools chief guilty of retaliating against teacher](#) | *The Washington Post*
- [A third of schools don't have a nurse. Here's why that's a problem.](#) | *CBS News*
- [Book Bans Aren't the Only Threat to Literature in American Classrooms](#) | *Time*
- [Infused by national politics, school board races look like the main event in November elections](#) | *Penn Live*
- [School board opponents in Orange Unified turn in signatures for recall election](#) | *EdSource*
- [States Are Calling for More Computer Science Classes. Now They Need the Teachers](#) | *Education Week*
- [Schools staff up as student enrollment drops](#) | *The Hechinger Report*
- [Overhaul of K-12 schooling becomes a flashpoint in Ohio](#) | *ABC 30*

Take our Candidate Connection survey to reach voters in your district

CANDIDATE CONNECTION

Today, we're taking a look at responses from two candidates facing off on Nov. 7 in the nonpartisan general election for Academy School District 20 school board, At-large, in Colorado. Four candidates are running for the two seats on the ballot. In the Sept. 27 edition of this newsletter, we featured responses from incumbents Heather Cloninger and Will Temby, who were, at the time, the only candidates to have completed the survey.

Since Sept. 27, the other two candidates in the race have completed the survey. Let's look at responses from Derrick Wilburn and Amy Shandy. Academy District 20, which includes the northern parts of Colorado Springs, is the 10th largest district in the state, with an enrollment of around 26,600 students.

Here's how Wilburn answered the question, "**What areas of public policy are you personally passionate about?**"



"I am personally passionate about the erosion of parental rights. With very rare exceptions, nobody cares more about the welfare of children than their parents. They raise and nurture to the best of their abilities for 18 years. The very idea that a public institution, like the school system, can work against parents or be actively involved in deceiving or keeping information from parents ought to give pause to all. Schools must partner with the families."

Click [here](#) to read the rest of Wilburn's responses.

Here's how Shandy answered the question, "**What areas of public policy are you personally passionate about?**"



"I am passionate about returning D20 back to a focused mindset where the main things are the main things: reading, writing, math, science and civics. Implementing board policy that reflects the community's vision and values for things like age-appropriate library books will help alleviate the distractions and return to an academic focus mindset."

Click [here](#) to read the rest of Shandy's responses.

Everyone deserves to know their candidates. However, we know it can be hard for voters to find information about their candidates, especially for local offices such as school boards. That's why we created Candidate Connection—a survey designed to help candidates tell voters about their campaigns, their issues, and so much more.

In the 2022 election cycle, **6,087** candidates completed the survey.

If you're a school board candidate or incumbent, [click here](#) to take the survey. And if you're not running for school board, but there is an election in your community this year, [share the link](#) with the candidates and urge them to take the survey! If you're a school board candidate or incumbent, [click here](#) to take the survey.

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Join us on our mission to deliver unbiased and accurate information about American politics and policy to our millions of readers. Your support in 2023 will allow us to continue our mission to build the most comprehensive coverage of the nation's rapidly changing political landscape.

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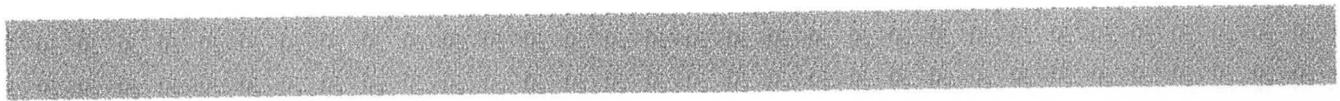
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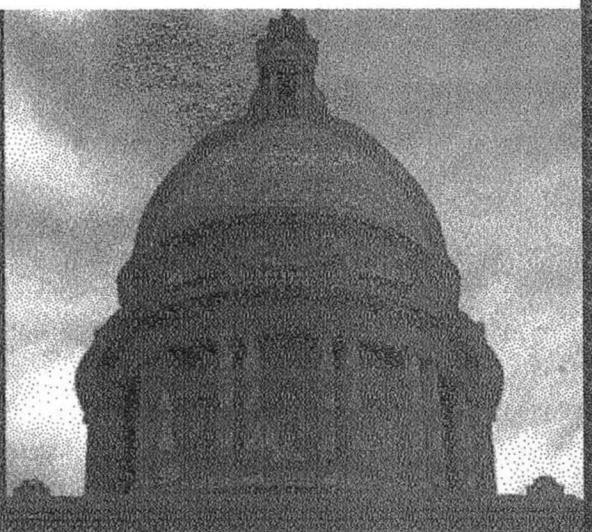
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

2023 REGULAR SESSION



KSBA

KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION



March 31, 2023

This is the final weekly legislative update of the 2023 session. For ongoing education-related coverage, please follow KSBA on Twitter ([@KSBAnews](#)) and read KSBA publications

The session is over

Late Thursday night, the 2023 session officially ended. On the last two days, many bills, some of them on major issues, passed to the governor's desk. He will now have around 10 days to consider vetoing any of those last-minute bills, however most of the education-related issues are settled.

It will take us some time to digest the details of some of them, which is why the annual KSBA policy update drafting begins when session is over. We will be working just as hard as we were all session, to analyze the bill and make the necessary changes to board policies. The policy update will be sent to local boards by the end of May.

Before then, on April 12th, we will have an hour-long webinar to discuss the major bills. [Registration is open](#). Then, after the policy update is in your hands, we will have our annual Federal and State Law Update virtual conference, to explain in detail every bill that passed and all the policy updates.

For a short session that began with promises of "we're not going to do much," it was busier than a normal long session. Legislators passed major things such as legalization of medical marijuana and sports betting. In education, dozens of new laws will impact boards and students. And, as you know, the legislation impacting people who are transgender saw some of the most emotional testimony and demonstrations we have seen in many years at

the Capitol. Everyone in the building will tell you this was an extremely difficult session.

5 most immediately pressing bills



SB 150 – Curriculum, parental notifications, bathroom policies for students who are transgender and medical care for transgender minors

It's important now to know that Sections 1 to 3 of this bill are in effect now. Read the [final version](#) paying attention to Sections 1 to 3, which are the education-related pieces.

The most immediate provisions to note are:

1. The required parental notifications about health services offered to students at school and the provision that states: "a local school district shall not require school personnel or students to use pronouns for students that do not conform to that particular student's biological sex..."
2. The provision on page 3 stating: "prior to a well-being questionnaire or assessment, or a health screening form being given to a child for research purposes, a school district shall provide the student's parent with access to review the material and shall obtain parental consent..."
3. Finally, the provision on page 7 stating: "Each local board of education . . . shall, after allowing public comment on the issue at an open meeting, adopt policies necessary to protect the privacy rights outlined in subsection (2) of this section . . . Those policies shall, at a minimum, not allow students to use restrooms, locker rooms, or shower rooms that are reserved for students of a different biological sex . . ."



Top: Sen. Max Wise, R-Campbellsville, speaks in favor of Senate Bill 150, legislation related to gender services and education. Bottom: Sen. Karen Berg, D-Louisville, speaks against Senate Bill 150, a bill related to gender services and education Photos: LRC

SB 7 – Payroll deductions for public employees

This bill is now in effect. Read the [final version](#). It makes major changes to the things districts are legally allowed to deduct from an employee's payroll. It is important that every payroll clerk in every district is aware of this bill. Note that it includes a fine of between \$100 and \$1,000 per offense if a district violates the new restrictions on payroll deductions. The most vital parts are Sections 2, 3 and 6. There are some parts that appear to be conflicting, or unclear, and it is possible that the state Labor Cabinet may provide guidance to districts and all other public employers soon.

SB 5 – Parent complaint policies

We have discussed this bill previously, but want to note that while the [final version of this bill](#) is now in effect, within the bill it only states that local boards must adopt a policy on this "no later than July 1, 2023." Therefore, this is not immediately in place and we have some time to craft these policies. In fact, KSBA and KDE are communicating on the model policies to be provided by KDE by May 1 and which will be a part of the KSBA policy update. There will be time for local boards to adopt them by July 1.

HB 5 – Bourbon barrel taxation

One of the very last bills passed was HB 5, the bill to phase out the local property taxes imposed on bourbon aging in barrels. We need to note that about five different versions were in play just yesterday alone, and the language kept changing slightly on exactly how parts related to SEEK and the "replacement tax" for schools would be calculated and paid by distilleries in the future. Read the [final version of the bill](#) and note the "replacement tax" for schools is in Section 2, especially on page 4. The bill ended up with two unrelated tax issues in it, so our focus is on this part.

HB 538 – Student discipline

This was one of KSBA's priority bills, and the governor has signed it into law. It doesn't have an emergency clause, so it will not be in effect until the end of June. Some superintendents were concerned about some parts of this bill, but the final version that passed had some key amendments that addressed those concerns. Now, we believe this bill will only be providing principals, superintendents and school boards with more flexible options for student discipline, some of which many district leaders have been asking for a long time. One notable part is on page 4, at line 23.

Additional state SEEK funding to districts with growth in ADA

On the last night, HB 553 was amended and passed, with an important change impacting growth districts. The final version of the bill inserted Section 8, on page 7, which requires the Department of Education to do one more recalculation of all districts' final SEEK allocation. This final calculation was done back on March 1, and now will be recalculated to take into account the "second month growth" figure that districts counted around Oct. 1 of this school year.

No district will see its SEEK allocation reduced by this, but around 27 districts will likely see the allocation increased due to growth this year as compared to the base year selected to be funded on during the pandemic (either 2018-19, or 2019-20). More information on this will be forthcoming from the department. We believe the source of cash for this increase will be the SEEK fund for this year, meaning that the amount of any SEEK surplus (leftover money) at the end of the fiscal year will be smaller than otherwise expected, which doesn't impact districts because it is set to lapse to the state general fund.

Note that legislators made clear last night in comments that starting with next school year, beginning on July 1, all districts will go back to receiving money through the normal SEEK formula, using actual current daily attendance as based on this year. For some this will likely increase, but for most this will likely decrease, as compared to what you have been paid this year. For those districts, this is due mostly to decreased attendance rates and/or enrollment.

To wrap up, for now

Bear with us as we comb through last minutes changes to bills passed last night and begin to prepare guidance and the policy update. Contact us anytime we can help answer a question.

Lastly, as always, for KSBA and for all the students, we want to thank you for every call, email, text and visit with legislators to discuss the impact, good and bad, that proposals would have on education. The influence is with you. Thank you for your public service and support of this part of the work.



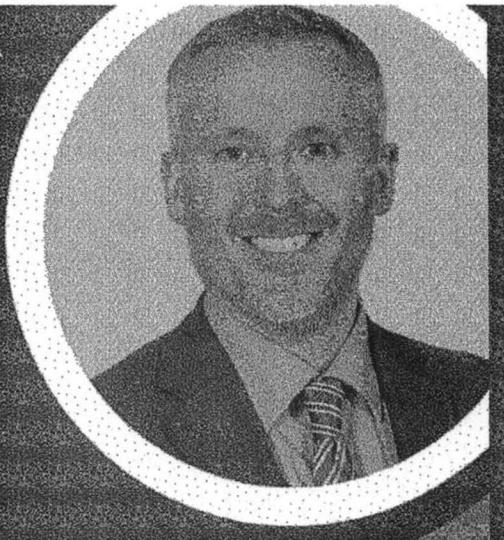
2023 Legislative Session Recap: Major bills impacting boards



Wednesday, April 12
Noon – 1 p.m. (ET)



Eric Kennedy
KSBA Director of Advocacy



KSBA offers legislative recap webinar April 12

KSBA's 2023 Learn and Earn Webinar Series kicks off April 12 at noon (ET) with "2023 Legislative Session Recap: Major bills impacting boards." Join us for an hour-long legislative recap. With the 2023 General Assembly adjourned, school districts are charged with implementing changes brought on by newly passed legislation. Participants in this webinar will receive an update from KSBA Director of Advocacy Eric Kennedy on key education bills and their impact on students, schools and board policy. The webinar will allow time for audience Q&A.

Date: April 12

Time: Noon – 1 p.m. (ET)

Title: 2023 Legislative Session Recap: Major bills impacting boards

Presenter: Eric Kennedy, KSBA director of Advocacy

Register for this webinar

KSBA's "Learn and Earn" webinar series offers insightful (and concise) topics each month while providing school board members with easy opportunities to earn state-mandated training. Sessions are scheduled for noon – 1 p.m. (ET) on the second Wednesday of each month at a cost of \$50 per session. Pre-registration is required. All Learn and Earn webinars count for 1 hour of board training credit.

Note: To expedite the registration process for participating districts, KSBA now requires the \$50 registration fee be paid with a credit card at the time of registration. Please be prepared to enter your payment information when you register. Registrations are non-refundable. If a registrant is unable to participate in the live webinar, he/she may still be able to earn credit by later watching a recording of the webinar. Access to a recorded version will be made available to all registrants in the days following the live event.

[Visit KSBA's website](#) for details on KSBA's 2023 Learn and Earn webinar series.

Legislative resources

For more information on all bills, legislators and legislative proceedings, visit the [Legislative Research Commission \(LRC\) website](#). Continue to stay tuned to [KSBA](#) on Twitter for timely updates, legislative news and resources.

[ON A SCREEN](#) for timely updates, legislative news and resources.



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BALLOTPEDIA'S **HALL PASS**

Welcome to Hall Pass

April 12, 2023

Welcome to *Hall Pass*, a newsletter written to keep you plugged into the conversations driving school board politics and governance.

In today's edition, you'll find:

- On the issues: The debate over middle school algebra
- Share candidate endorsements with us!
- School board filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications
- Reflections on COSSBA's inaugural conference
- Extracurricular: education news from around the web
- Candidate Connection survey

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[On the issues: The debate over middle school algebra](#)

In this section, we curate reporting, analysis, and commentary on the issues school board members deliberate when they set out to offer the best education possible in their district.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the [San Francisco Unified School District](#) enacted a policy that prevents advanced students from taking Algebra 1 classes in eighth grade. Instead, the district requires all students to take the same classes, regardless of ability, through 10th grade (at which point advanced students can try to accelerate into harder classes like calculus and trigonometry). On March 22, a group of parents [sued the district](#), saying Algebra I should once again be on offer for middle school students with the requisite mathematical knowledge.

Stephen Sawchuk writes that eliminating advanced (also called tracked) courses from middle school curricula promotes equity between students of different races and economic backgrounds. Sawchuck says wealthier parents use advanced classes to help their children gain an unfair academic advantage over poorer students. He says the data shows that the policy has helped close that gap and improve algebra outcomes for more students.

Rex Ridgeway and David Margulies write that the San Francisco policy limits student advancement and removes opportunities from students who are proficient at math and would benefit from advanced instruction. They say wealthier families can work around the policy and pay for higher-level classes and tutoring, while high-performing poorer students have no way of accessing more difficult classes and getting a head start on college prerequisites.

[A Bold Effort to End Algebra Tracking Shows Promise](#) | Stephen Sawchuk, *EducationWeek*

“Part of an ambitious project to end the relentless assignment of underserved students into lower-level math, the city now requires all students to take math courses of equal rigor through geometry, in classrooms that are no longer segregated by ability. That means no ‘honors’ classes. No gifted track. No weighted GPAs until later in high school. No 8th grade Algebra 1. ... In effect, by de-tracking math classes, San Francisco has done away with one of the key avenues that the well-connected use to give their children an academic advantage. ... This year, San Francisco got something of an ace in its back pocket to show skeptics of the plan: Data shows better math outcomes for students who took the de-tracked courses.

SHOWS BETTER MATHEMATICAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WHO TOOK THE UN-TRACKED COURSES

compared with the cohort before them. The number of students repeating algebra has fallen among all ethnic and racial groups, and fewer are receiving D's and F's in Algebra 1. About a third more students are ready for calculus, and that pool is more diverse than it's ever been. While it's not proof-positive that the new course sequence has caused the better outcomes, leaders say, it's a hopeful sign."

SFUSD's delay of algebra 1 has created a nightmare of workarounds | Rex Ridgeway and David Margulies, *San Francisco Examiner*

"All parents want opportunities for their children to excel academically. However, reaching the top in math at San Francisco Unified School District, is like climbing a cactus tree. It's going to hurt. At SFUSD, a math curriculum limiting student advancement currently exists; especially hindering socio-economically disadvantaged students from advancing in math. This is counter to what parents expect from a school district. ... A lack of transparency, and manipulating data to justify policies, demonstrates how SFUSD operates. The benefits of eighth-grade algebra 1 are clearly explained in an open letter signed by nearly 1,800 science, technology, engineering and math professionals. This course initiates a five-year pathway to STEM readiness culminating in AP calculus in 12th grade. In practice, SFUSD's delay of algebra 1 has created a nightmare of workarounds. Families with resources turn to fee-required online algebra 1 courses in eighth grade, outside the public school system, or enroll their kids in private schools."

Share candidate endorsements with us!

As part of our goal to solve the [ballot information problem](#), Ballotpedia is gathering information about school board candidate endorsements. The ballot information gap widens the further down the ballot you go, and is worst for the more than 500,000 local offices nationwide, such as school boards or special districts. Endorsements can help voters know more about their candidates and what they stand for.

Do you know of an individual or group that has endorsed a candidate in your district?

[CLICK HERE TO LET US KNOW.](#)

School board update: filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications

Ballotpedia has historically covered school board elections in about 500 of the country's largest districts. This year, Ballotpedia is covering elections for approximately 8,750 seats in 3,211 school districts across 28 states—or about 36% of all school board elections this year. [Click here](#) to read more about our 2023 school board coverage.

Upcoming school board elections

We're covering school board elections in the following states in the next month.

Texas

Some districts in the Lonestar State will hold general elections on May 6, while others will hold general elections on Nov. 7. On May 6, we're covering elections in 58 districts, including the following with more than 75,000 students:

- [Dallas Independent School District](#)
- [Northside Independent School District \(Bexar County\)](#)
- [Fort Worth Independent School District](#)
- [Katy Independent School District](#)
- [Fort Bend Independent School District](#)

New Jersey

[Newark Public Schools](#), the largest district by enrollment in the Garden State, is holding general elections on April 25. Three seats are up for election.

Nebraska

[Lincoln Public Schools](#), the state's second largest district by enrollment, is holding general elections May 2. Primaries were April 4. Three seats are up for election.

Reflections on COSSBA's inaugural conference

My colleague Juan García de Parades sat down with me last week to get my thoughts on my recent trip to Tampa, Fla., where I attended the Consortium of State School Boards Association's (COSSBA) inaugural conference. If you're a subscriber to Ballotpedia's [Daily Brew](#), you'll have gotten an early look at this story last week. What follows is an abbreviated version of our conversation.

Juan García de Parades: How was Tampa?

Samuel Wonacott: Tampa was a lot warmer than Tulsa, Okla., where I live, and there were more palm trees (Tulsa does not have palm trees)! I've always enjoyed a good palm tree.

Juan: Glad you got some sun! Let's talk about the conference. Set the stage for our readers. What is the Consortium of State School Boards Associations? It's a relatively new organization, right?

Samuel: That's right. A group of state school boards associations came together and founded COSSBA in 2021. Before that, the primary national organization representing state school boards associations was the [National School Boards Association](#) (NSBA), which was founded in 1940. NSBA says that it works "with and through our State Associations, NSBA Advocates for Equity and Excellence in Public Education through School Board Leadership." COSSBA describes itself as a "non-partisan, national alliance dedicated to sharing resources and information to support, promote and strengthen state school boards associations as they serve their local school districts and board members."

COSSBA is made up of many former members of the NSBA. Interestingly, the NSBA also held its annual conference in Orlando last week.

Juan: Can you explain what a state school boards association does?

Samuel: They are nonprofit organizations made up of school board members from around the state. Governance rules vary by state but all associations essentially serve the same purpose—providing training and resources to

school board members and superintendents and representation in state government. That is, they lobby on behalf of school board members.

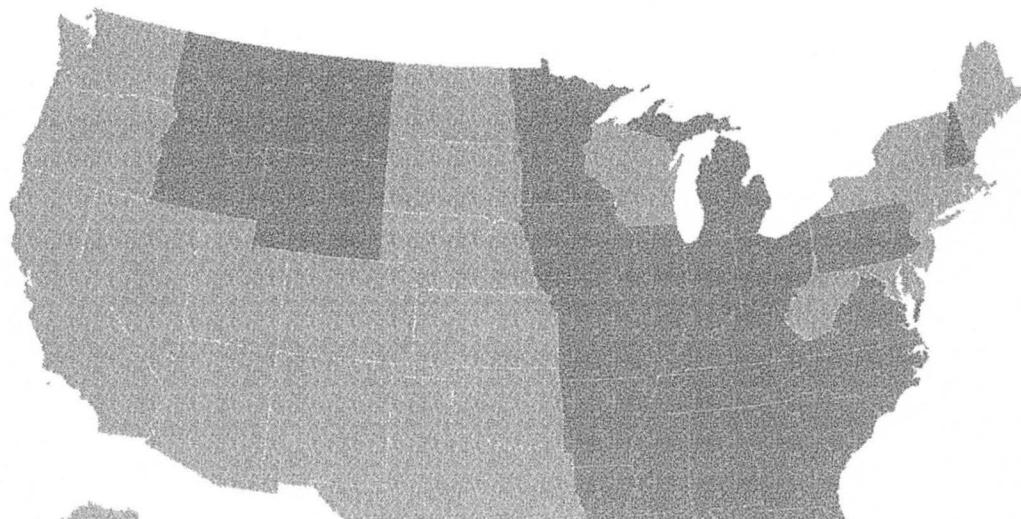
Juan: Okay, so a bunch of state school boards associations got together in 2021 and formed COSSBA. Why?

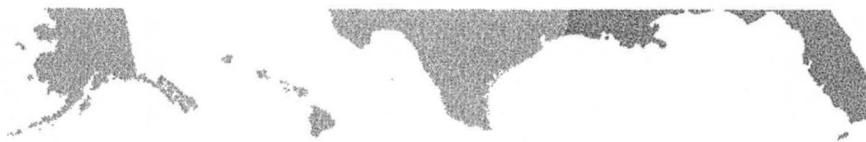
Samuel: In September 2021, NSBA leadership wrote [a letter](#) to President Joe Biden (D) referencing threats and disruptions at school board meetings, and said some of those actions could be considered the equivalent of domestic terrorism. The NSBA requested federal law enforcement to train and assist school board members on handling these disruptions. A month later, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland [issued a memorandum](#) in which he directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and U.S. attorneys to meet within 30 days with leaders in every federal judicial district to discuss ways to address threats against school board members and educators.

Critics of the NSBA letter said it and Garland's memorandum unfairly compared parental concerns over masking policies and other COVID-19 responses to domestic terrorism. A group of 17 state attorneys general—all Republicans—sent a letter to Biden and Garland on Oct. 18 asking for them to withdraw the memo because of the chilling effect it could have on parents' speech rights.

Although the NSBA board [apologized](#) for how the letter was worded, between October 2021 and June 2022, 25 state school board associations decided to terminate or not renew membership in the NSBA. Many of those states later formed COSSBA.

Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA) membership, 2023





Juan: You spoke with many school board members at the conference. What sort of education topics were they talking about? Were there any big themes you picked up on?

Samuel: I asked board members about the biggest issues in their districts, and I heard some common themes. One was that districts were struggling with the aftermath of the pandemic. From issues like teacher morale to student discipline, many seemed to believe the pandemic was kind of the root of many current district hurdles. Relatedly, board members also talked about the struggle of rebuilding the community's trust in the board in the pandemic's aftermath. Funding was another theme, another issue that came up quite a bit. That included concerns about funding disparities within districts, where individual schools—some just miles apart—end up receiving different amounts of money, which lead to divergences in per-pupil spending, school facility quality, and so forth.

Juan: What about conference-wide themes? What topics and issues defined the conference?

Samuel: Even though you can make a case that politics played a pretty big role in the events that led to COSSBA's formation, the conference itself was pretty decidedly apolitical. The learning sessions, which were mostly led by school board members, covered school safety, school board governance, how to select superintendents, talking to the media, and so on. Neither the attendees nor the conference programming had much to say on hot-button political or culture topics. One session, probably the one that touched most overtly on politics, was titled "Staying in the Center Lane—Leading in Turbulent Times." It was presented as a case study about how the politically diverse Dublin City Schools board, in Dublin, Ohio, operates in good faith even in the midst of real disagreement. So, even there, the focus wasn't on political issues per se but, rather, on how a board can manage political differences and conflicting values.

Juan: Was there much talk about state-level education policies?

Samuel: Not so much, as the board members and conference organizers were really focused on policies school boards have direct—or through the

superintendent—indirect control over. There was one session I attended on how the Idaho School Boards Association has welcomed charter schools into its ranks that occasioned some strong, differing opinions on the topic of charter schools in the Q&A period. But with the exception of that session, I didn't hear much talk about, say, charter schools, vouchers, or Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)—three big education policy topics in the news this year.

Juan: Who was at the conference? What states were represented?

Samuel: This was COSSBA's inaugural conference—and a lot of people were there! According to registration data there were more than 1,700 registered attendees and vendors. School board members from all 23 states associated with COSSBA registered for the conference. You had school board members from small, rural schools with only a few thousand students, to some of the largest districts in the country—like Miami-Dade Public Schools, in Florida.

Juan: Did attendees have much to say about the COSSBA/NSBA split?

Samuel: No, not really. I would say most people I talked to were optimistic about COSSBA's future and excited to be part of a new organization at the national level. That said, I talked to many longtime board members who had attended NSBA conferences in the past, and many of them were taking a wait-and-see approach to COSSBA.

Juan: Thanks for that information on the conference. Which COSSBA states are holding elections this year?

Samuel: Fifteen of the 23 states whose state associations are affiliated with COSSBA are holding school board elections this year. That includes four states whose elections we're covering comprehensively—Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Eight of the states holding elections this year are NSBA members. One state holding elections—Iowa—holds dual membership in COSSBA and NSBA, while three states—Nebraska, Texas, and Wisconsin—are unaffiliated with either organization.

Juan: Thanks, Samuel.

Samuel: Thanks, Juan!

Extracurricular: education news from around the web

This section contains links to recent education-related articles from around the internet. If you know of a story we should be reading, reply to this email to share it with us!

- [Oklahoma board rejects first taxpayer-funded religious school in US](#) | *Reuters*
- [Court backs teacher firing over transgender students' names](#) | *Associated Press*
- [Will school shootings in 2023 outpace last year's record high?](#) | *K-12 Dive*
- [Kansas lawmakers plan to use COVID-19 funds to expand voucher program to public school students](#) | *Kansas Reflector*
- [Chicagoans want elected school board to better represent Black and Latino students](#) | *Chalkbeat Chicago*
- [State of the States: Governors and PK-12 education policy](#) | *Brookings*
- [School District Mission Statements Highlight a Partisan Divide Over Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in K-12 Education](#) | *Pew Research Center*
- [How to fix the growing discipline problem in U.S. classrooms](#) | *WBUR*

Take our Candidate Connection survey to reach voters in your district



Today, we're looking at responses from [Simon Salinas](#) and [Katherine Goodwin](#), who are running in the May 6 general election for [Plano Independent School District](#) school board Place 7 in Texas. Incumbent [Cody Weaver](#), who is also running, has not completed the survey.

The Plano Independent School District is [the 18th largest district](#) in Texas,

with an estimated enrollment of around 53,000 students.

Here's how Salinas answered the question, "**What are the main points you want voters to remember about your goals for your time in office?**"



- "Fiscal Responsibility & Equal Distribution of Funds: I will be responsible with tax dollars and will continue making sure that underserved communities in our district are receiving equal funds.
- Community Connections: As a recent graduate, I am intimately aware of the current concerns of our students and our teachers. We need to meet the community where they are as opposed to expecting the community to come to us.
- Teachers, Staff, and Student Success: The Plano ISD Board needs to continue to support innovative initiatives by the teachers and the Plano ISD Administration that make life more rewarding for teachers like including mental health resources. During COVID, my classmates and I experienced a shift in our learning. I believe now more than ever, we have to design a system that offers more individualized options for student success and growth. Kindergarten readiness and College readiness are important targets that are currently lacking attention in our School District. We must make sure that each student in Plano ISD will be ready to learn at a higher level if he/she chooses to attend college or trade school."

ISD Board needs to continue to support innovative initiatives by the teachers and the Plano ISD Administration that make life more rewarding for teachers like including mental health resources. During COVID, my classmates and I experienced a shift in our learning. I believe now more than ever, we have to design a system that offers more individualized options for student success and growth. Kindergarten readiness and College readiness are important targets that are currently lacking attention in our School District. We must make sure that each student in Plano ISD will be ready to learn at a higher level if he/she chooses to attend college or trade school."

Click [here](#) to read the rest of Salinas's answers.

Here's how Goodwin answered the question, "**What are the main points you want voters to remember about your goals for your time in office?**"



- "Katherine Goodwin will ensure educational excellence and equity by working to close the opportunity and achievement gaps for ALL our students, whomever they are, wherever they come from.
- Plano ISD must help students and parents to feel their children are physically and emotionally safe at school—lifted by the comfort of feeling they



belong.

- We must honor our educators by paying them what they deserve, protecting their ability to teach the truth and rebuilding trust.”

Click [here](#) to read the rest of Goodwin’s answers.

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From: KSBA (Kentucky School Boards Association) josh.shoult@ksba.org
Subject: KSBA Aware - News from the Kentucky School Boards Association
Date: April 19, 2023 at 11:14 AM
To: laura.weddle@boyle.kyschools.us

K

[View as Webpage](#)

April 19, 2023

KSBA AWARE

News from the Kentucky School Boards Association

In this issue:

- KDE issues guidance on SB 5, the parental complaints bill, and SB 150, the parental rights and transgender issues bill
- Save the date for KSBA's 2023 Law Update
- May Learn and Earn focuses on student health services
- KSBA joins education panel discussion on Kentucky Tonight
- Student success the focus of #KyGivesDay 2023
- Updated FERPA guidance released
- Summer Leadership Institute to be held this July in Lexington
- Annual board policy updates coming soon
- Superintendent search alert
- KSBA in the news
- Upcoming dates, deadlines and events



KDE issues guidance on SB 5, the parental complaints bill.

and SB 150, the parental rights and transgender issues bill

The Kentucky Department of Education released guidance this week on several education bills that contain emergency clauses – meaning they are already in effect.

Education Commissioner Jason Glass said in his Monday Message that the guidance may create more questions than answers.

“We at KDE do not have the authority to answer, directly or definitively, many of the good questions that you may have about these new laws,” he said. “We urge you to make decisions about the questions raised collaboratively with your district counsel.”

The guidance includes **Senate Bill 5**, which creates a process for parent complaints about materials/programs they view as “harmful to minors” under a definition of the term in the law. KSBA worked with KDE to create the **model policy language** in the guidance and will be sent to districts as part of KSBA’s annual policy update.

The law requires boards to adopt a complaint resolution policy by July 1.

Also included is guidance for **SB 150**, which put new rules around parents’ rights, transgender student bathroom policies and medical care for transgender children. The guidance states that the bill creates confusion because of possible conflicts with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The guidance also says KDE can no longer give guidance around pronoun usage, because the new law states that teachers cannot be required to call students by pronouns that do not align with their biological sex at birth. In the **supplemental guidance on SB 150**, KDE explains that a 5th grade health standard on puberty can no longer be taught.

“We do understand that questions may arise around matters such as curricular systems, connections to early college credit (Advanced Placement and dual credit) course content, and student free speech or other potential federal constitutional issues these laws may create,” Glass said.

The **recently issued guidance** also covers HB 32, HB 153, HB 553, SB 25, SB 49 and SB 107.

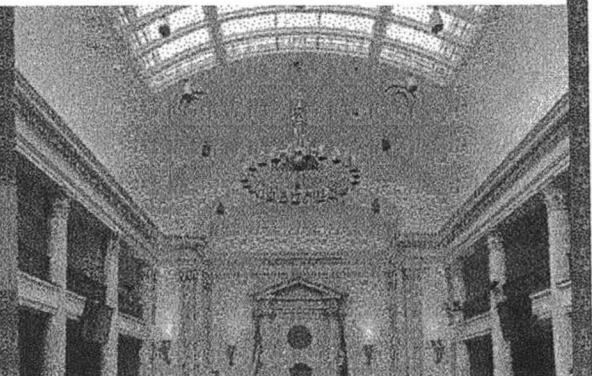
KDE staff went over the guidance during **Tuesday’s Superintendents Webcast**. During the next **Superintendents’ Webcast on May 9** KSBA staff will join KDE staff for a breakdown of the SB 5 policy. School boards will receive their full annual policy updates from KSBA at the end of May.

2023 FEDERAL & STATE LAW UPDATE

Thursday, June 8 | 9 a.m. - Noon (ET)
Virtual Conference



Eric Kennedy



KSBA Director of Advocacy



Katrina Kinman

KSBA Director of Policy
& eMeeting Services



John Powell

KSBA Staff Attorney



Save the date for KSBA's 2023 Federal and State Law Update

KSBA's 2023 Federal and State Law Update will be held virtually from **9 a.m. until noon (ET) on Thursday, June 8**. This training is recommended for school board members, superintendents, assistant superintendents, board attorneys, school/district administrators, finance officers, etc. The agenda, presented by knowledgeable KSBA attorneys and policy staff, includes an in-depth legislative session recap, board policy and procedure updates, recent Open Meetings and Open Records decisions, case law developments and federal updates.

Participants are eligible for 3 hours of training credit (state-mandated board training, CLE and EILA). The registration fee is \$200.

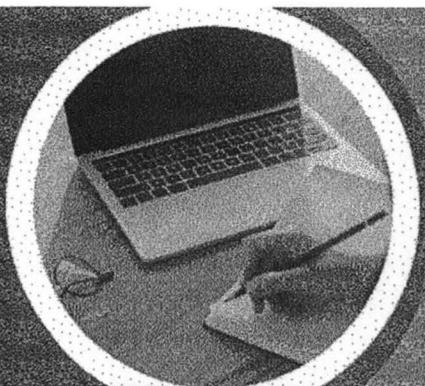
Online registration for KSBA's 2023 Federal and State Law Update will open Wednesday, April 26 on [KSBA's website](#).

[View/download an informational flyer including schedule and presenters.](#)

LEARN + EARN

2023 Webinar Series

KSBA offers convenient, one-hour online board training the second Wednesday of each month. Check out this year's lineup.



May webinar focuses on student health services

Join us Wednesday, May 10 from noon to 1 p.m. (ET) for "Who is Caring for our Students?"

KSBA's May Learn and Earn webinar will explore the most common models districts are using to provide health services to their students (and staff) during the school day, including district employed, contractual and partnering with other health providers. While the opportunities are varied, the importance of this daily care has proven critical to maximizing student achievement, attendance and healthy outcomes. Kentucky examples will

maximize student achievement, attainment and healthy outcomes. Kentucky examples will be highlighted.

Presenters: Jim Tackett, healthy schools project director, Stephanie Bunge, school health consultant, Kentucky Department of Education

For more information and online registration for KSBA's Learn and Earn webinars, visit: ksba.org/LearnandEarn.aspx



KSBA joins education panel discussion on Kentucky Tonight

[Watch Kentucky Tonight from Monday, April 17 on KET.](#)

Host Renee Shaw led a panel discussion on the challenges facing public schools. The program featured KSBA Director of Advocacy Eric Kennedy, State Rep. James Tipton, State Rep. Tina Bojanowski, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence CEO Brigitte Blom, Kentucky Association of School Administrators CEO Rhonda Caldwell and Andrew Vandiver of EdChoice Kentucky.

The discussion ranged from parents' rights and school choice to transgender student policies and how to address the teacher shortage.





#KyGivesDay 2023 is all about student success

The KSBA Educational Foundation will participate in Kentucky Gives Day on Tuesday, May 9. The association will once again challenge members, education leaders and friends to support student success in the form of KSBA's college scholarship and CTE student grant programs.

Over the past two years alone, KSBA has awarded nine college scholarships to Kentucky high school seniors who will be the first in their immediate families to complete a postsecondary program, as well as 100 CTE grants to Kentucky high school students who are pursuing CTE industry certifications.

These efforts would not be possible without the ongoing support of education leaders like you. We ask you to join us May 9 for a day of giving and action. KSBA believes that cost should not prevent our Commonwealth's students from pursuing their dreams. All of the money raised during Kentucky Gives Day will support KSBA's student scholarship and grant programs.

Learn more about the KSBA Educational Foundation and the association's commitment to student aid. **Bookmark the foundation's #KyGivesDay page** so you can easily make your gift in May.

Thank you for your support of student success!

Updated FERPA guidance released

The U.S. Department of Education has released updated guidance on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Resources include:

- **Guidance for School Officials on Student Health Records**
- **Know Your Rights: FERPA Protections for Student Health Records**
- **An Eligible Student Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is a federal law, first established in 1974, that protects the privacy of students' education records and applies to educational agencies (like school districts) and institutions (i.e., schools such as public elementary or secondary schools, and institutions of postsecondary education such as colleges or universities) that receive funding under any program administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

Summer Leadership Institute to be held in July

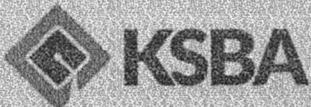
KSBA's 2023 Summer Leadership Institute will be held July 14-15 at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington. A conference schedule, session descriptions and online registration will be made available in the weeks ahead on KSBA's **CTI page**.

Annual board policy updates coming soon

Districts will once again receive their annual board policy updates at the end of May. If your district's policy contact has not received an update by June 1, be sure to check spam folders or firewall settings.

The KSBA Policy and Procedure Service celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and is now proudly serving all 171 school districts across Kentucky!

Superintendent SEARCH ALERT



Superintendent search alert

KSBA's [Superintendent Search Service](#) is currently facilitating a search in the following district. Click the district name to be directed to the position posting.

[Lincoln County Schools](#)

Application deadline: April 21, 2023

[Rowan County Schools](#)

Application deadline: May 5, 2023

KSBA in the News

Because of the unique roles school boards play in matters of policy and education trends, KSBA is often called on by media outlets to weigh in on important school-related issues and provide background.

(April 13) [When will Kentucky school districts implement new pronoun, anti-](#)

Upcoming dates, deadlines and events

April 19: Student Technology Leadership Program championship

April 26: Administrative Professionals' Day

May 8-12: Teacher Appreciation Week

May 9: KDE's Superintendents Webcast

May 9: Kentucky Gives Day 2023

May 10: May Learn & Earn – Who is caring for our students?

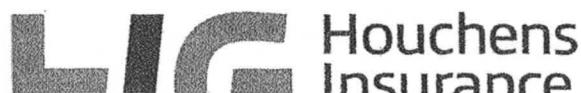
May 12: National School Communicators Day

June 8: Federal and State Law Update

July 14-15: Summer Leadership Institute, Lexington

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